

Office of the President

831 Grand Avenue, Glenwood Springs, Colorado 81601 **P** 970.945.8691

September 2, 2010

Higher Education Strategic Plan (HESP) c/o Kim Poast, Deputy Director, Colorado Dept of Higher Education

Dear Dr. Poast

Congratulations on the progress made in pulling together all the subcommittees' work into one solid draft. Nicely done.

After reviewing the HESP draft dated 8/24/2010, Colorado Mountain College would like to offer a few suggestions to clarify the intent of the HESP and avoid unintended consequences or misunderstandings.

- Include a 'Definitions' page listing operational definitions for terms as:
 - "Public system of higher education" as defined on page 13, first paragraph, seems to include CMC and Aims. If this is accurate, then there are inaccurate statements on page 14, 4th paragraph: "... and must operate pursuant to a performance contract with CCHE." [local district colleges do not] "However, the General Assembly retains the authority to approve tuition spending authority for the governing board of the institution." [local district colleges have tuition spending authority through local governing boards].
 - "System of colleges and universities", please define the "system" scope, for instance, does this include private for-profit and non-profits? Local district colleges? etc. (page 14, last paragraph)
 - <u>"Systems and individual institutions"</u> (page 15, 1st paragraph) please define who is included in "systems" and who is included in "individual institutions".
 - o <u>"Institutional Subsidies"</u> (page 15, 2nd paragraph, 2nd bullet, 1st sub-bullet)
 - o <u>"integrated system"</u> (page 16, grid at bottom of page)
 - o "audit and synchronize" (page 20, grid at bottom of page)
 - o "Community colleges" (page 23, 1st bullet)

We appreciate your patience with our questions above. CMC is sometimes categorized as a "state institution" and other times as a "local district college" separate from other state institutions; therefore, we want to insure our understanding of exactly where CMC is included and not included in the HESP.

Concerning the discussion of providing more funding directly to students via COF, we submit that this does not intuitively seem to be a high-impact initiative to improve retention and completion rates. Rather, a set of common Metrics would be more impactful in causing institutions to shift even greater attention to retention and graduation initiatives. This could also cause greater efficiencies as institutions would be forced to be even more responsive in launching high-demand programs and retiring low completion programs.

CMC will be present at the scheduled HESP visits in Grand Junction and Gunnison. At this point, CMC would have the following questions to ask at these sessions:

- 1. Concerning the revenue strategies of Restoring income and sales tax and Expand sales tax to specific services (page 10), our CMC communities might be unsupportive unless we can explain what ROI our specific communities will have. The taxpayers in our district voted to tax themselves many years ago in support of CMC. Essentially, they are double taxed for higher education via local support (mill levy) and state incomes & sales tax. What impact will having an existing mill levy have in the distribution of new funds?
- 2. Concerning the revenue strategy of a mill levy, either statewide or by county, we respectfully submit that CMC communities will question turning our existing mill levy dollars over to a statewide central pot for redistribution outside our district. Would that be the intent of these two strategies? CMC, for many years, has not received capital construction dollars or fee for service from the state due to the support of our local taxpayers. If the existing CMC mill levy is left unharmed, then the actual additional amount generated will be approximately \$50 million less than projected for this strategy (page 11).
- 3. Please expand on strategy "Targeting funding as the state deems appropriate" (page 15, 2nd paragraph, 2nd bullet, 3rd sub-bullet).
- 4. Please explain "consulting" on page 15, 2nd paragraph, 3rd bullet, 2nd sub-bullet).
- 5. Please explain how CMC will be considered in the finance policy and recommendations to the legislature regarding allocations to institutions? (page 16, 2nd, 3rd and 5th bullets)
- 6. Please define "Coordinate with governing boards" (page 16, 7th bullet)
- Please expand on "Adopting minimum standards for open enrollment". (page 24, 2nd bullet, 5th sub-bullet)

CMC remains committed to being very active in the implementation of the HESP. Thank you to your team for such great work, and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this feedback.

Respectfully,

Stanley E. Jensen, Ph.D.

President

Colorado Mountain College